CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method for managing a network, comprising:

presenting a graphical display of a plurality of graphical depictions representing nodes in said network;

accepting a user selection of a first graphical depiction representing a first node;

automatically determining allowability of a connection to a second node if a second graphical depiction representing said second node is in graphical proximity to an on-screen cursor;

indicating said allowability on said display;

accepting a user selection of said second graphical depiction;

displaying a graphical representation of an allowable connection between said first node and said second node; and

implementing said allowable connection in said network.

2. The method described in Claim 1 wherein said accepting a user selection of a first graphical depiction comprises highlighting of said first graphical depiction with a visual attribute.

3. The method described in Claim 1 wherein said accepting a user selection of a first graphical depiction comprises presenting a movable graphical line between said first graphical depiction and said on-screen cursor.

4. The method described in Claim 3 wherein said user selection of a second graphical depiction is facilitated by a on-screen radius.

5. The method described in Claim 4 wherein said on-screen radius is represented by a circle centered on said on-screen cursor.

6. The method described in Claim 4 wherein said on-screen radius is user selectable.

7. The method described in Claim 4 wherein a movable graphical line is displayed between a closest allowable connectable node displayed within said on-screen radius.

8. The method described in Claim 1 wherein said indicating a second graphical depiction comprises highlighting a plurality of graphical depictions representing allowable connectable nodes to said first node.

9. The method described in Claim 1 wherein said automatically determining allowability of a connection to a second node comprises

accessing data in a memory-resident database of allowable connections to said first node.

10. The method described in Claim 1 wherein said graphical representation of a connection between said first node and said second node comprises a line between said first graphical depiction and said second graphical depiction.

11. The method described in Claim 1 wherein said network is a provisionable network and wherein said nodes are heterogeneous.

12. A system for managing a network, comprising:

a plurality of nodes in said network;

a database comprising information concerning the allowability of connections between said plurality of nodes;

a graphical user interface for displaying graphical representations of said plurality of nodes and for displaying a representation of an allowable tentative connection between the nodes;

a process for automatically determining connection compatibility of a first node to a second node based on said database and for authorizing said allowable tentative connection based thereon; and

an element for implementing said allowable tentative connection in response to a user action.

13. The system described in Claim 12, wherein said representations are icons representing said plurality of nodes.

14. The system described in Claim 12, wherein said tentative allowable connection is a line.

15. The system described in Claim 12, wherein said graphical user interface comprises an on-screen cursor.

16. The system described in Claim 15, wherein said representation of said tentative connection is between said on-screen cursor and an icon representing a selected node.

17. The system described in Claim 16, wherein said graphical user interface further comprises an on-screen radius associated with said selected node.

18. The system described in Claim 17, wherein said on-screen radius enables assisted selection of said second node.

19. The system described in Claim 18, wherein said snap radius determines graphical proximity of said on-screen cursor to an icon representing said second node.

20. The system described in Claim 19, wherein said database is queried for connection compatibility when said icon representing said second node is graphically within said on-screen radius.

21. A computer system having a processor coupled to a memory wherein said memory comprises instructions that, when executed, implement a method for managing a network, said method comprising:

presenting a graphical display of a plurality of graphical depictions representing nodes in said network;

accepting a user selection of a first graphical depiction representing a first node;

automatically determining allowability of a connection to a second node if a second graphical depiction representing said second node is in graphical proximity to an on-screen cursor;

indicating said allowability on said display;

accepting a user selection of said second graphical depiction;

displaying a graphical representation of an allowable connection between said first node and said second node; and

implementing said allowable connection in said network.

22. The computer system described in Claim 21 wherein said accepting a user selection of a first graphical depiction comprises highlighting of said first graphical depiction with a visual attribute.

23. The computer system described in Claim 21 wherein said accepting a user selection of a first graphical depiction comprises presenting a movable graphical line between said first graphical depiction and said on-screen cursor.

24. The computer system described in Claim 23 wherein said user selection of a second graphical depiction is facilitated by a on-screen radius.

25. The computer system described in Claim 24 wherein said on-screen radius is represented by a circle centered on said on-screen cursor.

26. The computer system described in Claim 24 wherein said on-screen radius is user selectable.

27. The computer system described in Claim 24 wherein a movable graphical line is displayed between a closest allowable connectable node displayed within said on-screen radius.

28. The computer system described in Claim 21 wherein said indicating a second graphical depiction comprises highlighting a plurality of graphical depictions representing allowable connectable nodes to said first node.

29. The computer system described in Claim 21 wherein said automatically determining allowability of a connection to a second node comprises accessing data in a memory-resident database of allowable connections to said first node.

30. The computer system described in Claim 21 wherein said graphical representation of a connection between said first node and said second node comprises a line between said first graphical depiction and said second graphical depiction.

31. The computer system described in Claim 21 wherein said network is a provisionable network and wherein said nodes are heterogeneous.